

Message Text

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15

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SUBJ: SHAKE-UP IN SERBIAN PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE

BELGRADE PRESS JAN. 16 GAVE EXTENSIVE DETAILS OF 55TH PLENUM CC LC SERBIA PREVIOUS DAY. MEETING APPROVED REMOVAL OF NIKOLA PETRONIC FROM POSITION OF SECRETARY CC AND REPLACEMENT BY DJORDJE LAZIC, WHO HAS BEEN SECRETARY BELGRADE PARTY. MIROSLAV MARKOVIC, BLAGOJE BJELOGRLIC AND BORIVOJE SIMIC ALSO TAKEN OFF LCS CC SECRETARIAT; NO REPLACEMENTS NAMED. PETRONIC AND OTHERS SAID TO HAVE BEEN REMOVED BECAUSE OF "NEED FOR FURTHER STRENGTHENING IDEOLOGICAL-POLITICAL UNITY" OF SERBIAN PARTY AND TO TAKE CARE OF "RESERVATIONS" WHICH REMAINED ABOUT THOSE MEMBERS OF SECRETARIAT PROBABLY A REFERENCE TO NIKEZIC TIES, IN CASE OF MARKOVIC, BJELOGRLIC, SIMIC. ALL WILL, AT LEAST FOR TIME BEING REMAIN IN CC.

2. RESIGNATION FROM CC OF ALEKSANDAR MIKIC "ACCEPTED" AT PLENUM. MIKIC ALLEGED TO HAVE BEEN GUILTY OF "MISTAKES AND WAKNESSES" AS TEACHER AT LAW FACULTY NOVI SAD UNIVERSITY. (MIKIC HAD BEEN IVP GRANTEE IN 1966.)

3. PLENUM TOOK UP DRAFT REPORT PRESENTED BY CC MEMBER MILUTIN MILOSEVIC ON LCS ACTIVITIES IN "STORMY PERIOD" SINCE SIXTH
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LCS CONGRESS FIVE YEARS AGO. (FINAL TEXT OF REPORT IS TO BE

COMPLETED BY MID-FEBRUARY AND TO BE PART OF MATERIALS FOR SEVENTH LCS CONGRESS SCHEDULED FOR LATE APRIL.) ALTHOUGH EX-LCS HEAD MARKO NIKEZIC NOT MENTIONED BY NAME IN PRESS COVERAGE OF DRAFT REPORT, LENGTHY REFERENCES MADE TO PERIOD OF HIS LEADERSHIP AS TIME OF LIBERALISM, ELITISM AND INADEQUATE WORKER PARTICIPATION IN SERBIAN PARTY; OF WEAKENED TIES BETWEEN CC AND PARTY BASE; AND OF "DEVIATION FROM MARXIST IDEOLOGY AND POLITICAL LINE OF LC". NEW LCS LEADERSHIP CREDITED WITH IMPROVING CADRE SITUATION (20,000 NEW MEMBERS -- 6,000 OF THEM FROM WORKER RANKS -- IN FIRST HALF OF 1973) AND WITH STRENGTHENING IDEOLOGICAL UNITY.

4. COMMENT: BELGRADE GOSSIP HAS FROM TIME OF PETRONICS BEING NAMED LCS SECRETARY IN OCT. 1972 WRITTEN HIM OFF AS TOKEN WORKER SHOVED INTO PARTY LEADER ROLE, WOEFULLY UNQUALIFIED AND A "PRIMITIVE". HE HAS BEEN OUT OF PUBLIC EYE IN RECENT MONTHS AND WAS ONLY REPUBLICAN PARTY SECRETARY NOT TO HAVE RECEIVED AWARD FROM TITO AT AVNOJ CELEBRATIONS IN JUNE LATE LAST YEAR. LAZIC ALSO OFFERS CREDENTIALS OF WORKER BACKGROUND (BELGRADE TRANSPORT ENTERPRISE AND IKARUS FACTORY) BUT IN ADDITION HAS HAD CONSIDERABLE EXPERIENCE IN YOUTH WORK, BELGRADE OPSTINA PARTY WORK, AND AS PRESIDENT BELGRADE TRADE UNION COUNCIL. LAZIC TOOK OVER BELGRADE PARTY SECRETARY SLOT LATE IN 1972 FROM OUSTED BORA PAVLOVIC AND CAME BACK INTO LCS CC IN APRIL 1973. HE HAD BEEN MEMBER OF CC AND SECRETARIAT IN SIXTIES; WAS REPLACED BY BJELOGRLIC (SEE PARA 1) IN 1969, DOUBTLESS BECAUSE LAZIC WAS NOT A NIKEZIC MAN WHILE BJELOGRLIC WAS (NIKEZIC HAD COME IN AS LCS PRESIDENT LATE IN 1968). SIMIC WAS BROUGHT INTO SECRETARIAT IN 1970, MARKOVIC IN 1971 -- CERTAINLY BOTH NIKEZIC MEN. WE FIND IT INTERESTING THAT DESPITE CRITICISM OF PETRONIC AND OTHERS, THEY HAVE NOT YET BEEN KICKED OUT OF CC ITSELF. EVIDENTLY RESIDUAL PRO-NIKEZIC FEELING IN LCS IS STILL STRONG ENOUGH TO CALL FOR SOME DISCRETION IN REMOVING NIKEZIC MEN. PROCESS OF ELECTING NEW LCS CC SLATE, NOW BEING CARRIED OUT AT OPSTINA PARTY LEVELS, WILL PRESUMABLY GET RID OF KNOWN NIKEZIC ADHERENTS WITHOUT BRINGING ON CONFRONTATION SITUATION WHICH OVERT CC PURGE MIGHT HAVE RISKED.

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